

News Release

Local Broadband Work Garners Tekne Award, Recognition for Innovative Collaboration; Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities Initiative Receives Innovative Collaboration Award during ceremony on November 1, 2012, at Minneapolis Convention Center

By Itollefts on Monday, November 5, 2012

Billed as the "Academy Awards for high tech," rural Minnesota communities and partners received a Tekne Award in Minneapolis on November 1, 2012, from the Minnesota High Tech Association for their work on broadband access and adoption. Representatives of the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) initiative collected the "Innovative Collaboration Award" in front of a crowd of nearly 1,000 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.



Through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant, the MIRC coalition, which included as one of its partners the Economic Development Administration University Center (EDA Center) located at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, brought together a network of resources and support to rural Minnesota individuals and communities--especially those unemployed and seeking employment, small businesses, coalitions of government entities, and local leaders.

Jack Geller, director of the EDA Center served as the project's primary evaluator and was pleased to be a part of the award winning project. He also acknowledges the vital role played by the University of Minnesota Extension in the MIRC and their work in rural Minnesota.

Selection of Tekne finalists and winners was made by an independent panel of judges. In choosing MIRC, an initiative convened by Blandin Foundation and involving 30 partners, judges noted that, "MIRC has benefited from a legacy of collaboration. MIRC partners are numerous and the impact the collaboration has had on broadband adoption is significant. In fact, the [broadband] adoption rate is 29.8 percent faster in MIRC partner communities when compared to the rest of rural Minnesota."

All rural regions of Minnesota have engaged in broadband projects as part of the MIRC Initiative. Individual communities initiated more than 70 locally designed and led demonstration projects, suchas Lac Qui Parle County's "Commuter Computer" (mobile learning lab) or Winona's "Project FINE" (language-specific computer literacy training in Hmong and Spanish).

Statewide MIRC partners provided training to more than 8,000 individuals, computers to more than 1,600 households and has resulted in more than 40,000 households in rural Minnesota subscribing to high-speed Internet. The two-year initiative was funded through a \$4.3 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant administered by Blandin Foundation and will be completed at the close of 2012.

"Resilient, vibrant communities are connected communities," said Dr. Kathy Annette, Blandin

Foundation CEO. "And the quality and diversity of those connections is a hallmark of a community's leadership and sustainability. Through MIRC, engaged local leaders and statewide partners worked together to bring the promises of broadband to many of Minnesota's rural communities, including all residents in their progress. Blandin Foundation is thrilled that coalition's ambitious and innovative work has been honored through the Tekne Award."

Presented by the MHTA, the Tekne Awards honor those who play a significant role in discovering new technologies that educate, improve lifestyles, and impact the lives and futures of people living in Minnesota and all over the world. The program reinforces Minnesota's place as one of the most competitive and technologically advanced regions in the world. A full list of winners and finalists is available online.

About the EDA Center at the U of M Crookston

The mission of the EDA Center, located at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, is to engage university faculty, staff and students with local, county and regional economic development agencies in support of the rural economy. For more information, contact Jack Geller at 218-281-8248 or visit the EDA Center's Web site at www.edacenter.org.

About Blandin Foundation

Blandin Foundation stands with rural Minnesota communities as they imagine and claim ambitious, vibrant futures. It is one of only a handful of foundations in the U.S. focused exclusively on rural communities and the largest rural-based private foundation in Minnesota. Information on Blandin Foundation grant-making, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives are at www.blandinfoundation.org and broadband news at www.blandinonbroadband.org. On Twitter at <http://twitter.com/BlandinFound>. Media contact: Allison Ahcan, 218-326-0523.

About Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA)

MHTA, or the Minnesota High Tech Association, is an innovation and technology association united in fueling Minnesota's prosperity. MHTA helps bring together the people of Minnesota's technology ecosystem and leads the charge in directing technology issues to Minnesota's state capitol. MHTA is the only membership organization that represents Minnesota's entire technology-based economy. Its members include organizations of every size – involved in virtually every aspect of technology creation, roduction, application and education in Minnesota. Find out more online at <http://www.mhta.org> or follow MHTA on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MHTA>.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 26 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 39 concentrations on campus--as well as 10 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photo: MIRC was awarded the Tekne "Innovative Collaboration Award." Jack Geller, director of the EDA University Center is on the far left.

News Categories

[Extension](#)

[Tweet](#)

News Home

News Archives



Employment

Events Calendar

Academic Calendar

Library

Directories

Maps, Directions & Parking

Quick Facts

Bookstore

Faculty & Staff

Email & Calendar

Contact Webmaster

System Website

Home

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716

800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

[Privacy Statement](#)